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Japan Society presents

Shun Ishiwaka: Jazz Transcending

Program 1: *The Dragon Painter*

Thursday, June 5 at 7:30 pm

Program 2: *Shun Ishiwaka with Adam O'Farrill*

Saturday, June 7 at 7:30 pm

Shun Ishiwaka: Jazz Transcending is supported by Doug and Teresa Peterson. Support for the international travel of Shun Ishiwaka is provided by The Japan Foundation.



2024—2025 Performing Arts Season Support

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the culmination of the Japan Society Performing Arts 2024-2025 season, featuring the young and talented musical artist Shun Ishiwaka.

Shun has received acclaim as an exceptional jazz drummer, but, particularly in recent years, he has made remarkable strides in broadening his artistic expression. I was inspired to introduce him to New Yorkers through his identity as a musician that goes beyond “jazz drummer.” An idea arose when I read an interview of Shun’s following his AI-involved project at YCAM (Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media), entitled *Echoes of Unknown Egos*, in 2022. There, he said, “I want to practice more and broaden my technique... Performing with AI and technology has made me see anew what I cannot do.” I was intrigued by the idea of challenging him to do something that he had never tried. So, I asked him if he had ever performed to/with a silent movie. He answered, “Never, but I want to try it!” Also, to portray him as more than a “jazz drummer,” I wanted him to perform on an instrument with a tonal sound, so I asked if he wanted to try it on a marimba or vibraphone. (I could guess from his educational background that he must have practiced either or both.) To my pleasant surprise, he said, “I’ve always liked those instruments!” My other inspiration was his connection with Hiromi, the internationally acclaimed jazz pianist and composer, with whom the brilliant trumpet player Adam O’Farrill has been performing as part of her new, ongoing jazz combo project. Before the second meeting with Shun in Tokyo, I had discovered that Shun and Adam knew *about* each other’s artistry, but had never performed together, and were happy to try out an improvisation duo.

I am slightly scared to reveal the background behind developing these two concerts within the *Shun Ishiwaka: Jazz Transcending* program—because it is merely the result of my instinct as a matchmaker for Shun. Still, I am sure it will work fabulously for audiences on both nights.



Yoko Shioya
Artistic Director

Japan Society presents

Shun Ishiwaka: *Jazz Transcending*

PROGRAM 1—JUNE 5 AT 7:30 PM

THE DRAGON PAINTER

Live accompaniment: Shun Ishiwaka—drums, vibraphone and piano

The Dragon Painter (1919), b&w, silent

Director: William Worthington

Starring: Sessue Hayakawa as Tatsu the Dragon Painter

Tsuru Aoki as Ume-Ko

Edward Peil as Kano Indara

Toyo Fujita as Undobuchida “Uchida”

Film runtime is 61 minutes.

PROGRAM 2—JUNE 7 AT 7:30 PM

SHUN ISHIWAKA WITH ADAM O’FARRILL

Shun Ishiwaka: drums, vibraphone

Adam O’Farrill: trumpet

Performance runtime is approximately 80 minutes with no intermission.

ABOUT SHUN ISHIWAKA

Shun Ishiwaka (percussion) is a percussionist and composer born in 1992 in Hokkaido, Japan. He graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts, majoring in percussion after attending its affiliated high school. Upon graduation, he received the Acanthus Music Award and the Douseikai Award, two competitive university awards given to the student of highest achievement.

Although still young, Ishiwaka has been influencing Japan's music scene and creating new trends through an unparalleled approach that straddles jazz, pop and contemporary classical realms. He has led music groups and projects such as Answer to Remember, CLNUP4, SMTK and Songbook Trio, and as a composer and arranger, he has produced and provided music for a variety of artists and film/video projects. Ishiwaka has participated in live performances and recordings by many renowned artists such as Terumasa Hino, Quruli, Ringo Sheena, Kenshi Yonezu, Gen Hoshino, Kid Fresino, Ohzora Kimishima, CRCK/LOKS, Banksia Trio, Marty Holoubek Trio II & IV, Yuya Wakai Trio and David Bryant Trismic. Ishiwaka has also performed with major orchestras including the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra, Sapporo Symphony Orchestra and Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also collaborated and joined performances/tours in Japan with such acclaimed international artists as Kurt Rosenwinkel, Jason Moran, Federico Casagrande, Tony Allen, John Scofield, Taylor McFerrin, Peter Evans, Fabian Almazan, Linda Oh, Richard Spaven and Corey King.

In 2022, Ishiwaka created several new projects attempting to perform with himself using artificial intelligence in collaboration with YCAM (Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media): this included a performance piece, *Echoes for Unknown Egos-Manifestations of Sound*; and an installation piece, *Echoes for Unknown Egos with Cymbals*. In 2023, he presented the world premiere of his own concerto suite *playgroundz (for percussion)* with the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra as part of the Hokkaido Television Broadcasting New Year's Eve concert. Ishiwaka also performed the drum part played by the character Shuji Tamada in the blockbuster anime film *BLUE GIANT*, released in 2023, alongside jazz pianist Hiromi and saxophonist Tomoaki Baba. Ishiwaka's band Answer to Remember released their second album, *Answer to Remember II*, in 2024. The album won the 17th CD Shop Awards 2025's Jazz Awards.

ABOUT THE FILM AND SESSUE HAYAKAWA (JUNE 5)

Starring Japanese matinée idol Sessue Hayakawa (1886-1973), the first actor of Asian descent to become a leading man in Hollywood and Europe, and self-financed by the actor's production company Haworth Pictures Corporation, *The Dragon Painter* (1919) is a rare example of a silent-era American production with an almost entirely Asian cast. Born and raised in Chiba, Japan as Kintaro Hayakawa, he attended a prep school in Tokyo affiliated with the Japanese Naval Academy. Due to an accident, he was unable to pursue a path to become a naval officer and moved to the U.S. to attend the University of Chicago, where he studied political economics. On the way back to Japan, he happened to take an acting gig in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, which caught the eyes of Hollywood's circle, eventually leading him to become one of the highest-paid movie stars of his time. With a vast body of films and roles to his name, he is perhaps best remembered today for his Academy Award-nominated performance as Colonel Saito in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957).

Achieving his breakthrough success in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Cheat* (1915) in the role of a sinister Japanese art dealer, Hayakawa was quickly typecast as the villain or forbidden lover. But at a time when anti-miscegenation laws—preventing interracial romances—were still active in Hollywood, Hayakawa's status as a silent-era sex symbol and his popularity among white women was unprecedented. Dissatisfied with the roles he was pigeonholed into—"My one ambition is to play a hero" he once lamented—and their negative representations of Japanese culture, Hayakawa moved into self-financing his films, motivated by his desire to introduce more authentic depictions of Japanese characters in film. The move would result in this remarkable feature, *The Dragon Painter*. Hayakawa portrays a brilliant reclusive painter obsessed with the tale of a dragon princess, becoming enraptured with his mentor's daughter Ume-ko (Tsuru Aoki, Hayakawa's wife) who he believes may be the princess incarnate. This film inhabits a dreamy fantasia of the Land of the Rising Sun—a fable that succeeds in its outright beauty and romanticism, imbued with the *Japonisme* and exoticism of its time.

ABOUT ADAM O'FARRILL (JUNE 7)

Adam O'Farrill (trumpet), born in 1994, has cemented himself over the last decade as one of the most in-demand trumpet players on the international contemporary jazz scene, and is widely recognized as a "rising star as a player and composer" (*PopMatters*) and "a blazing young trumpet talent" (*The New York Times*). O'Farrill has been featured with the likes of Hiromi, Mary Halvorson, Vijay Iyer, Anna Webber, Tyshawn Sorey, Mulatu Astatke, Son Lux, Samora Pinderhughes, Rudresh Mahanthappa and Photay, and has garnered widespread acclaim as a leader in his own right.

O'Farrill is the leader of the quartet Stranger Days, featuring Xavier Del Castillo, Walter Stinson and Zack O'Farrill. The band has released four albums, including 2024's HUESO, which *The Washington Post* called "strikingly original." The band's previous album, *Visions of Your Other*, was named one of 2021's best jazz albums by *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Popmatters*, and was awarded the Preis Der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik in January 2022. O'Farrill's most recent release, *For These Streets*, is a suite inspired by the culture, literature and music of the 1930's, performed by an octet composed of the world's foremost improvisors, including Mary Halvorson, Patricia Brennan, Kevin Sun, David Leon, Kalun Leung, Tyrone Allen and Tomas Fujiwara. *The Wall Street Journal* says, "Mr. O'Farrill here makes his boldest statement as a composer...he extends a storied lineage...[and] has his own distinct vision."

Adam has received awards and recognition for both his compositions and his work as an improviser. In 2014, he won 3rd place honors in the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Trumpet Competition, and in both 2019 and 2021, he won the Downbeat Critics Poll for Best Rising Star Trumpeter. Adam has received commissions and grants from organizations such as The Shifting Foundation, South Arts, Roulette, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Metropolis Ensemble and The Jazz Gallery, and won the ASCAP Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award.



Chiharu Shiota (Berlin, 2024) © Photo by Sunhi Mang

CHIHARU SHIOTA: FALL 2025

This fall, Japan Society launches the highly anticipated New York solo museum exhibition debut of contemporary artist Chiharu Shiota (b. 1972), ***Chiharu Shiota: Two Home Countries*** (September 12, 2025–January 11, 2026). Chiharu Shiota's starkly beautiful stage design will also be brought to American audiences for the first time in a new Japan Society theater commission based on one of the defining novels by legendary Japanese author Yukio Mishima (1925–1970), ***Kinkakuji*** (*The Temple of the Golden Pavillion*). This September production will open a fall series of four performing arts productions at Japan Society focused on this era-defining novelist.

Yoko Shioya 20/20: Celebrating 20 Years of Artistic Vision

For over seventy years, Japan Society's Performing Arts Program has enriched the arts in New York City, the U.S. and beyond through the presentation of artists whose works are formed or inspired by the arts and culture of Japan. Taking the mantle as head of Japan Society's Performing Arts Program in 2004, Yoko Shioya has carried this mission through the 21st century, programming over 200 events of the finest Japanese theater, dance, and music from the very traditional to the most cutting edge. Join us in celebrating Japan Society's Artistic Director Yoko Shioya's 20th anniversary and support the future of the Performing Arts Program! Your donation today will make tomorrow's unparalleled cultural experience possible.

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JAPAN SOCIETY
GALLERY EXHIBITION

Susumu Shingu: Elated!

Japan Society Gallery relaunches its summer exhibition series with a solo exhibition of the acclaimed sculptor Susumu Shingu (b. 1937). Shingu's application of biomimicry—drawing inspiration from natural forms and processes—appears in both the form and the dynamic movement of his kinetic sculptures. His abstract organic shapes recall insects, birds, and plants; their movements are powered by the often-invisible forces of our environment: wind, heat, light, water, and gravity. The exhibition highlights inspired sculptures in various sizes, including the artist's site-specific sculptures in New York.

Jun. 20, 2025 _____ Aug. 10, 2025

JAPAN CUTS *2025*

**The 18th annual JAPAN CUTS
Member's Presale Launched on June 3**

JAPAN CUTS: Festival of New Japanese Film returns July 10–20, and our member-exclusive presale has just started! Enjoy early box office access to 30+ curated premieres from across Japan—including major award-winners, indie darlings, documentaries and more—plus All-Access Passes, complimentary Shorts program tickets, and 20% off tickets and merch.

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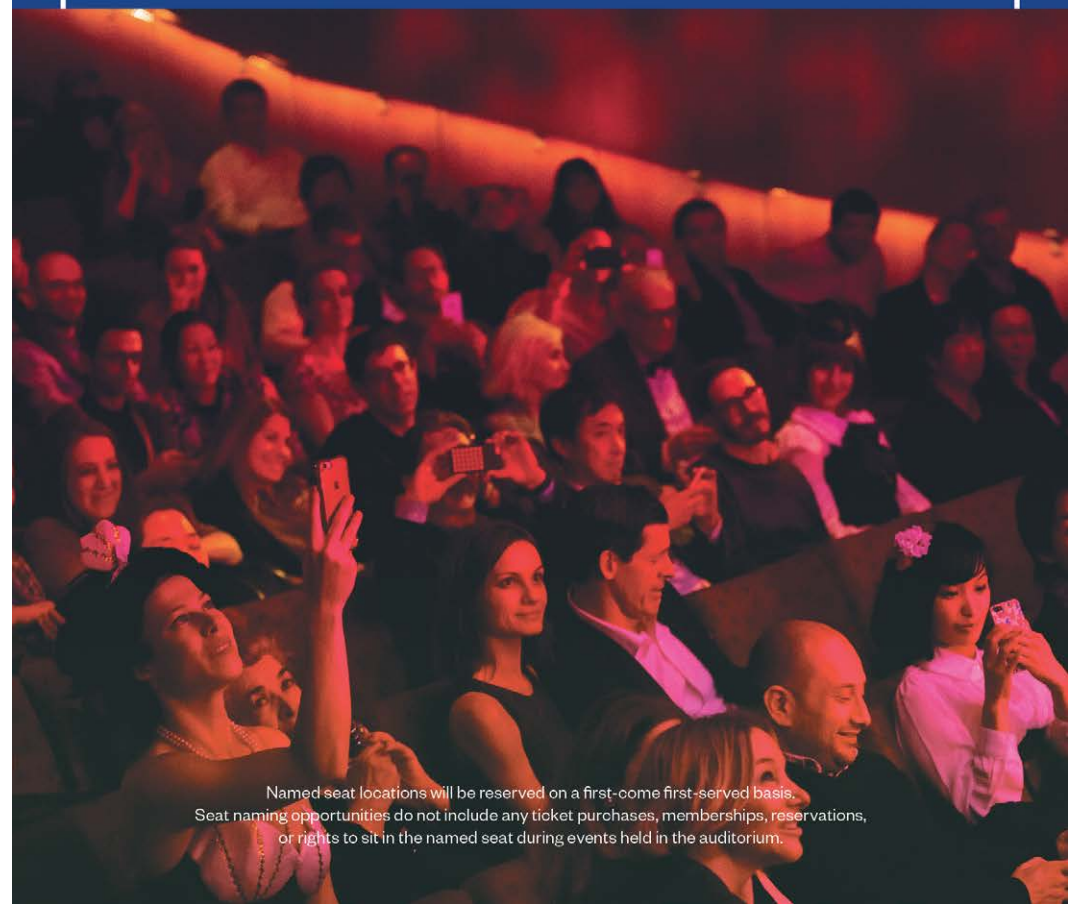
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